

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7, 16-20, and 22-28 were rejected under §103 based on Field (US 4,636,412) in view of Ohodaira et al. (US 4,482,585). Claims 6 and 21 were rejected as obvious based on Field in view of Hodaira and further in view of Kong (US 6,253,936).

While Ohodaira has been used as a secondary reference for the disclosure of a fluorinated rubber, this reference does as to a fluorinated rubber composite. The term composite was used in the original claims and finds support at page 6 in describing FIG. 5, and in the first full paragraph at page 9.

Nevertheless, to further distinguish Ohodaira, the independent claims have been amended to recite that the composite includes a reinforcement layer. This amendment also finds support, inter alia, at pages 6 and 9, as well as in the original claims. For example, dependent claim 7 recites a reinforcement layer.

A reinforcement layer is useful because it was found that fluorinated rubber alone is prone to forming cracks, leaks, and the like when subjected to repeated bending during ordinary use of a hydration system.

Ohodaira does not teach or suggest a composite or a reinforcement layer. Use of the Ohodaira layer alone, without a reinforcement layer, would lead to detrimental cracking, leaking, and the like during normal use of a system as claimed herein. Thus, the claims distinguish from the applied references.

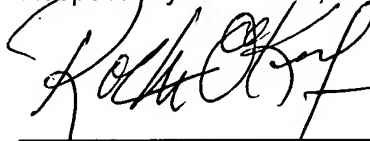
In view of the foregoing, the claims distinguish from the applied references.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and Notice of Allowance are courteously solicited.

Should any fees under 37 CRF 1.16-1.21 be required for any reason relating to the enclosed materials, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct such fees from Deposit Account No. 10-1205. The examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the phone number indicated below with any questions or comments, or to otherwise facilitate expeditious and compact prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,



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